

F020 004-1875

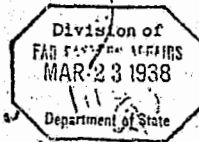
NO. 1189

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,

Shanghai, China, February 2, 1938.

CONFIDENTIAL

PM 2 52



SUBJECT: Activities of Hermann Frederick Erben.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the
130 Division, Hermann Frederick
Department's telegram No. 71, of January 26, 1938, 11
a.m., regarding Hermann F. Erben and instructing that
no assistance be rendered him in landing or traveling
in China.

Mr. Erben has made several calls at this office in
the past few days and has been informed that it is not
possible to render any assistance to him relative to
his intended travel in China. He states that he plans
to engage in medical work under the Chinese Red Cross,
as the only means of livelihood open to him, and that
he assumes that he will forfeit his right to American
protection but will not lose his American citizenship.

There is enclosed for the Department's information
1/ a copy of a letter received from the office of the United
States Treasury Attaché in this city dated January 26,

1938, regarding Mr. Erben.

130 - ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK

FILED

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F820004-1876

-2-

A copy of this despatch is being sent to the
American Consul at Kobe for his information.

Respectfully yours,

[Signature]
C. E. Gauss,
American Consul General.

Enclosure:

1/- Copy of letter from Office of U.S.
Treasury Attaché, January 26, 1938.

7/10
Carbon Copy
Received *[Signature]*

130/310
JBS:HDP/Cyk

0311507030

8820 004-1877

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 1189, dated February 2, 1938, from C. E. Gauss, American Consul General at Shanghai, on subject of Activities of Hermann Frederick Erben.

COPY

OFFICE OF THE TREASURY ATTACHÉ

UNITED STATES TREASURY DEPARTMENT
AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Shanghai, China,
January 26th, 1938.

American Consul General,
Shanghai, China.

Attention - Mr. Harold D. Pease

Sir: -

Re your inquiry relative to Dr. Herman Friedrich Von Erben, we received the following naval radio message from the Commissioner of Customs at Washington, D. C., under date of December 10th, 1937:-

"Paris reports Erben Confidential List 249 sailed December 2nd from Trieste on Conte Verde for Hong Kong Stop Recent circumstances do not justify belief Erben narcotic trafficker and his name will be removed from Confidential List Stop Suggested Campbell interview him and inform local authorities of Bureau attitude (Sgd) Gorman"

Respectfully,

(Signed) Ella M. Jacobson,
For the Treasury Attaché.

Copied by
Compared with

0311597030

No. 1040

F820004-1878

Confidential.

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE.

American Consulate General,
Shanghai, China, October 29, 1935.

Subject: Herman Frederick Erben.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE HONORABLE

SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

1935 DEC 4 PM 2 36

1. DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

DEC 5 PM 1 44

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I have the honor to refer to the Department's confidential instruction of September 12, 1935, requesting this office to inform the Treasury representative at Shanghai of the proposed visit to the Far East of Dr. Herman Frederick Erben, No. 249 on the Confidential List of persons suspected of being engaged in the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, and to report that a postal card has been received from Dr. Erben by this Consulate General. The postmark indicates that it was mailed in Calcutta on October 2, 1935, and the message reads as follows:

"Kindly forward all the mail addressed c/o U. S. Consulate General for Dr. H. F. Erben American Trans-asiatic Expedition to my new address, c/o American Express Co., New York City, New York."

Respectfully yours,

Edwin S. Cunningham,
American Consul General.

MBD MB

811.4

In Quadruplicate

No. Copy to Embassy.

Copy to Treasury Attache.

2 Green Copies

28175

130- ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK

In reply refer to
FE 130 Erben, Hermann Frederick

February 3 1936

CONFIDENTIAL

Attention: Bureau of Narcotics

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of the Treasury, and, with reference to previous correspondence, encloses herewith, in duplicate, for the confidential information of the Commissioner of Narcotics, a copy of despatch No. 432, dated November 15, 1935, from the American Consulate General at Singapore, together with a copy of its enclosure, with further reference to Doctor Hermann Frederick Erben, No. 249 on the Confidential List of persons suspected of complicity in the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.

There are also enclosed two copies of despatch No. 1811, dated January 8, 1936, from the American Consulate General at Vienna, in regard to the arrest of Doctor Erben a few days after his recent arrival in Vienna; for being in possession of codeine and opium.

Enclosures

From Consulate General, Singapore,
No. 432, November 15, 1935, in duplicate;
From Consulate General, Vienna,
No. 1811, January 8, 1936, in duplicate.

FE:HCS:AT

FE

NE

2/1/36

F820004-1880

NO. 432

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL, STATE

Singapore, S. S. November 15, 1935. DEC 24 AM 9 29

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Activities of Hermann Friedrich (von) Erben.

RECEIVED
STATE
DEC 23 1935

THE HONORABLE,
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

I have the honor to enclose a copy of a communication from the Office of the Director, Special Branch, Straits Settlements Police, relative to the activities of one Hermann Friedrich (von) Erben, said to be a naturalized American citizen.

Respectfully yours,

Thomas M. Enelly

Thomas McEnelly.
American Consul.

Enclosure:

Copy of communication from Straits Settlements Police.

File No. 320/811.4.

03:00:00
1-1111
1-1111

130-ERBEN, HERMANN FRIEDRICH VON
FREDERICK

SECRET.

F820004-1881

Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch No. 432
dated November 15, 1935, from Thomas
McEnelly, American Consul at Singapore, S.S.,
on the subject of Hermann Friedrich (von) Erben.

SECRET

Office of the Director,
Special Branch,
Straits Settlements Police.

Special Branch S.X.70/5. Singapore, 14th November, 1935.

Hermann Friedrich (von) Erben,
a naturalized American subject.

Dear Mr. McEnelly,

It may be of interest to you to know that
the above named left Calcutta, under a deportation
order ex British India per s/s "City of Rayville",
10/10/35.

2.

Erben was born in Vienna on 15/11/1897 and
served with Austrian Army during the War. After
the War he proceeded to the U.S.A. where he became
naturalized. He later returned to Vienna and
took a medical degree, then went back to America
as a Doctor in an Asylum. Later he became a
ship's doctor with the Dollar Steamship Co. and
in this capacity travelled around the world.
He lost his position as he came under suspicion
of being an international drug smuggler. He
returned to Vienna in 1923 and joined the Austro-
American Trans-Asiatic Expedition as a medical
officer. He left this expedition in India
and proceeded to Calcutta where he was prosecuted
for a breach of the Indian Arms Act. He will
not be permitted to land in Malaya.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

J.F.Fennefather-Evans.

Thomas McEnelly, Esq.,
As. American Consul-General,
SINGAPORE.

031507030

A true copy of
the signed origi-
nal.

F820 004 - 1943

M Warren
TO R. B. SHIPLEY,

FEB 21 1940

763
Chief Special Agent

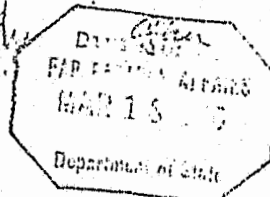
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

February 20th, 1940.



OFFICE OF
SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE
NEW YORK DIVISION
Box 150, GENERAL POST OFFICE
NEW YORK CITY

*Frederick informed
re: Hermann Erben*
SUBJECT: Pick up passport of
Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben.



REPORT READ AND TRANSMITTED
TO THE CHIEF SPECIAL AGENT

FEB 20 1940

[Signature]
Special Agent in Charge

File; T.M. message from Mr. Bannerman
to Mr. Fitch, February 20th, 1940.

Dear Mr. Fitch;

I boarded the S/S Nightingale of the Grace
Line at Pier #44, Brooklyn and found the above man still
aboard. His passport #272 had been taken up by an inspector
at the time of the ship's arrival and a notation of the officers
to this effect was written on a letter Dr. Erben had.

He informed me and his letters show that this
passport was issued by the American Consul at Buenos Aires on
December 1st, 1939 and the same has but a short time to run.

The Doctor stated he had been chief surgeon on the
S/S Ussurum, which acted as a supply ship for the battleship
Graff Spee for sometime but that his own ship had been scuttled
and he found himself on the beach.

The S/S Nightingale when at Valparaiso, Chile,
Consul
stated to the American they needed a messboy and according to
Erben suggested that this would be a good way to get to New York,
although Erben desired to get to his home in San Francisco.
He took the place and will be paid off tomorrow
the 21st, and will stay around New York until he can get a ship to

130. ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK

the west coast. He stated he could be reached while in New York at 850 Park Ave, Cfo, Dr. Rudolph Scharff,

Erben in the presence of the First Officer of the ship, Mr. M. Baron, Detective Silk and myself asked if this government considered him a German Agent and when I stated it was news to me, he stated that the night before he went aboard the ship in Valpariso, the American Consul informed him in confidence that the British Consul had stated he was known as the #1 German Agent and that more than likely would be taken off the ship on its arrival or before. Erben seemed to think Mr. Silk and myself were connected with the FBI.

Captain B. Parker and Mr. Baron the First Officer, stated they had no trouble with Erben but that he made a great many pictures of the ports and ships enroute.

Respectfully

W. D. Black
Special Agent.

RDC.

0315547000



F820 004-1945

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF
SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE
NEW YORK DIVISION
BOX 150, GENERAL POST OFFICE
NEW YORK CITY

March 2, 1940.

SUBJECT: Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben.

*File
JBE*

Mr. T. F. Fitch,
Acting Chief Special Agent,
Department of State.

Dear Mr. Fitch:

Herewith confidential letter of February 29, 1940 and enclosure
from Colonel F. K. Ross, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Governors
Island, N.Y. regarding this man; also our file on Dr. Erben.

Advice would be appreciated as to whether it is in order to give
Colonel Ross the information shown in our file.

Sincerely yours,

*Note: asked
ag. I. & said
OK, and I. 20
advised new
York office.
3*
[Signature]
Acting Special Agent in Charge.

LCT

130-ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK

MM

Inspected by 0315587030

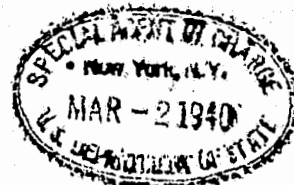
6820 004 - 1946
CONFIDENTIAL

P-17563

IN REPLY REFER TO:

HEADQUARTERS SECOND CORPS AREA
OFFICE OF THE CORPS AREA COMMANDER
GOVERNORS ISLAND, N. Y.

February 29, 1940.



Mr. Thomas F. Fitch,
Special Agent in Charge,
U. S. Department of State,
General Post Office Bldg.,
51st Street and 8th Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Fitch:

Enclosed is a copy of a report recently received at this office concerning certain activities of one Dr. EBEN whose first name and address are not known to this office.

It is thought that this report will be of interest to your Department since it is stated that Dr. EBEN is "travelling illegally on an American passport."

Will you kindly let me know whether you have any additional information concerning this individual.

I am also furnishing a copy of the enclosed report to the local office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a matter of information only.

With kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

F. K. Ross

F. K. ROSS

Colonel, General Staff Corps,
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2.

1 Incl.

0311000000

CONFIDENTIAL

F820 004 - 1947

February 28, 1940.

Memorandum for file.

The following is a copy of a report submitted to this office (G-2) on or about February 27, 1940, by Major William C. DeWare, Infantry, Officer in Charge, Army Information Service, Federal Office Building, 90 Church Street, New York City:

"A Mr. Aldo Balsom, 50 Pine Street, New York City, reported that a friend of his, a Dr. EBEN, he believes is travelling illegally on an American passport; he is a scientist and an authority on tropical diseases, but with it is a soldier of fortune and a German propagandist. He led an expedition to India, got in trouble with the British police and was put in jail. His death was reported in the New York Times (this paper has a rather complete file on him), but he later appeared in Austria, then in Berlin; came to America; went to Spain and fought on the Loyalists' side with Errol Flynn; returned to Berlin, returned to Spain and fought with Franco. He then went to China, served as a doctor, then went over to the Japanese side. Then he went to South Africa to colonize the German colony in the British holdings. He is reported to have been on the Altmark, an auxiliary cruiser with the Graf Spee, and had to jump overboard and wade to shore at Montevideo, arrived in the U. S. with nothing except what he had on his back. He was asked how he got here and what he was doing here, and his reply was vague and to the effect that there were many ways for doing things.

"He uses Dr. Shaff's office at 850 Park Avenue, NYC., as his mail address. Dr. Shaff told Mr. Balsom he did not know where he lived, either at the Seamen's Institute, NYC. or at Hoboken, N. J.; that a Mr. Watt, Department of Justice had called at the 850 Park Avenue address and asked for Dr. Eben and asked that he call at his office at 90 Church Street. Dr. Eben has been in this country about a week.

"Mr. Balsom said that he has known Dr. Eben for sometime but felt that he was engaged in some pro-German or pro-Nazi activity which was not healthy and felt that he was illegally using an American passport; that he felt he must report the matter to proper authorities."

E N D

G-2 Notes:- New York City telephone directory does not show a listing for a Mr. Aldo Balsom, 50 Pine Street, but there is a listing for one A. R. Balsam, 50 Pine Street (phone: Bowling Green 9-8590), who is probably the person referred to in the above report from Major DeWare.

New York City telephone directory does not show a listing for a Dr. Shaff, 850 Park Avenue. The telephone directory does, however, show a listing for one Dr. Rudolph Schaff, 850 Park Avenue (phone: Butterfield 8-5950), who is probably the doctor referred to in the above report from Major DeWare.

666
CONFIDENTIAL

MALARIA RESEARCH PARTY IN BAGHDAD

Baghdad, June 6--The scientific expedition which left Austria in the middle of April under the guidance of Dr. Herman R. Erben, an American, arrived here this week in a specially constructed Steyer vehicle. The members of the party, who will remain in Baghdad for a week, are chiefly interested in tropical diseases and Dr. Erben states the his purpose is to test a new anti-malarial drug in the countries through which he is passing.

The expedition will travel to India and China.

Palestine Post, June 13, 1935

THREE MEN LEAVE VIENNA ON 20,000-MILE JAUNT

Vienna, April 20--Three men in a motorcar started from here today on a journey that will take them more than 20,000 miles through Asia on a scientific expedition. They are: Max Reich, Austrian sportsman; Dr. Herman F. Erben, of San Francisco, and Helmuth Hahmann, Vienna photographer.

Dr. Erben, a scientist formerly attached to the Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine, wishes to study the natives of those parts of Asia through which the expedition will pass.

New York Herald Tribune
(Paris Edition) April 21, 1935

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WASHINGTON TIMES

September 11, 1935.

*File
Jm
8-16-35*

U. S. DOCTOR FACING DEPORTATION BY INDIA

CALCUTTA, Sept. 11 (I.N.S.).

Arrested on a charge of possessing unlicensed arms and ammunition, Dr. Hermann F. Erben, of San Francisco, today paid a fine of 22 pounds, 10 shillings (about \$110) and was held by authorities for deportation to the United States.

Dr. Erben, an Austrian-born naturalized American, was released in bail pending outcome of the deportation proceedings. He was first taken into custody for possession of unlicensed firearms while on an automobile trip across Asia with several Austrian companions.

130- ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK FILED

SEP 11 1935

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130 - S.B.H.

CONFIDENTIAL

DR. HERMAN FREDERICK ERBEN (VON ERBEN)

WASHINGTON, July 1, 1933

CONFIDENTIAL LIST NO. 249



(SIGNATURE)

Nationality:- American (naturalized)

Place of birth:- Vienna, Austria.

Date of birth:- November 15, 1897.

Address in United States:- (1930)

St. Josef's Hospital, Buena Vista and
Hill Avenue, San Francisco, California.

Height:- 6 feet

Weight:- About 200 pounds

Hair:- Blond

Eyes:- Blue

Occupation:- Physician

Scar on right thumb and on left
cheek; speaks English, Russian, German and
French; claims to be a Russian and a
member of the "White Russians" (Anti-
Soviet).

Herman F. Erben

DR. ERBEN, for three years ship's doctor with the Dollar Line Steamship Company, was recently discharged from the S. S. GARFIELD because, it is alleged, of suspicion that he was engaging in the traffic in narcotics.

He is now reported to be practising medicine in Shanghai and is said to be associated with a group of doctors who are handling narcotics. He is also said to have connections at Manila and Singapore and to maintain a residence at III Arenbergring 19, Vienna.

700004-1951